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a water-permeable pressure layer having a load which can suppress a deformation of the packed bed of the solid catalyst and/or the solid adsorbent; and

a layer configured to disperse and mitigate an upward stream of the waste water or a waste gas, said layer being provided under the packed bed;

wherein the pressure layer is provided on the packed bed of the solid catalyst and/or the solid adsorbent; and

wherein the dispersing and mitigating layer is a plurality of rigid metallic particles or ceramic particles.--

#### REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Initially, the Examiner is thanked for the courtesy of the personal interview conducted with one of the Applicants' attorneys, Joseph Scafetta, Jr., on November 15, 2000.

Claims 1-20 were originally filed in this application. This Amendment After Final Rejection amends Claims 1, 2, 6, 8-10, 13-15, 19 and 20; cancels Claims 3-5, 11, 12 and 16-18; and adds new Claims 21-30. Claim 7 is left unamended. Thus, 22 claims are in this application for reconsideration.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1, 10-14 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, for indefiniteness; Claims 1, 2, 10 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) for anticipation by the U.S. Patent of Miller; Claims 4, 5, 11, 12, 16 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for obviousness over the same U.S. Patent of Miller; and Claims 3, 6-9, 18 and 19 were objected to because they depended upon rejected base claims.

The Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication that Claims 3, 6-9, 18 and 19 would be allowed if they are rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of their base claims and any intervening claims. Accordingly, dependent Claim 3 has been canceled and placed into the bodies of independent Claims 1 and 2. Also, dependent Claim 6 has been placed into independent form by incorporating therein the body of its parent Claim 2. Likewise, dependent Claim 18 has been canceled and the subject matter thereof has been inserted into the body of its base Claim 15. Additionally, the dependency of Claims 8-9 and 19 has been changed from canceled Claims 3 and 18, respectively, to amended independent Claims 1-2 and 15, respectively. Therefore, withdrawal of the objection to Claims 3, 6-9, 18 and 19 is respectfully requested.

In response to the rejection of Claims 1, 10-14 and 20 for indefiniteness, Claim 1 has been amended as suggested in the Office Action at page 2, lines 13 and 14, by changing "packet" to --packed--. Also, Claim 20 has been amended to set forth clearly the structural relationship between the packed bed and the wet oxidation treatment unit. Thus, withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 1, 10-14 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, for indefiniteness is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action at page 5, lines 8-12, it is stated that Claims 13, 14 and 20 would be allowed if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of their base claims and any intervening claims. Therefore, dependent Claims 13 and 20 have been rewritten into independent form. Thus, since the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112 for indefiniteness is believed to be overcome, an indication of the allowability of Claims 13, 14 and 20 would be appropriate.

In response to the rejection of Claims 1, 2, 10 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) for anticipation by Miller, independent Claims 1-2 and 15 have been amended to incorporate therein the bodies of allowed dependent Claims 3 and 18, respectively. Therefore, careful

reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 1, 2, 10 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) for anticipation by Miller are earnestly solicited.

Based upon the above discussion, it is respectfully submitted that dependent Claims 4-5, 11-12, and 16-17 are patentably distinguishable over the single applied reference of Miller since their independent parent Claims 2, 1 and 15, respectively, have been amended to recite subject matter already considered patentable in the outstanding Office Action. Therefore, the rejection of Claims 4, 5, 11, 12, 16 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for obviousness over Miller is believed to be overcome.

By this Amendment, the Applicants add new Claims 21-30. Therefore, favorable consideration of new Claims 21-30 is respectfully requested.

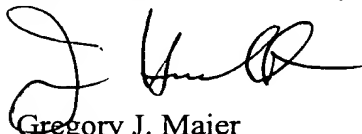
Finally, in reviewing the Office Action of July 18, 2000, the Applicants' attorneys noted that the Information Disclosure Statement filed on July 13, 2000, was not considered. Therefore, in the next communication from the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office, it is respectfully requested that the Information Disclosure Statement and the seven prior art references listed on the Form PTO-1449 be carefully considered.

In the European Search Report, the Examiner considered U.S. Patent No. 5,601,797 of Gentry to be particularly relevant to allowable Claims 3, 6-9, 18 and 19 if taken alone. Also, the Examiner considered European Patent No. 636,399 to be particularly relevant to allowable Claims 3, 8 and 9 if combined with another document of the same category. Furthermore, the Examiner considered British Patent No. 2,297,923 to be particularly relevant to allowable Claims 18 and 19 if taken alone. However, the Examiner did not state why these three references are particularly relevant. Nevertheless, careful consideration of these three references and the other four references cited in the European Search Report is respectfully requested.

Consequently, in view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, no further issues are believed to be outstanding and the present application should be considered in clear condition for formal allowance. Therefore, a quick and favorable action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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